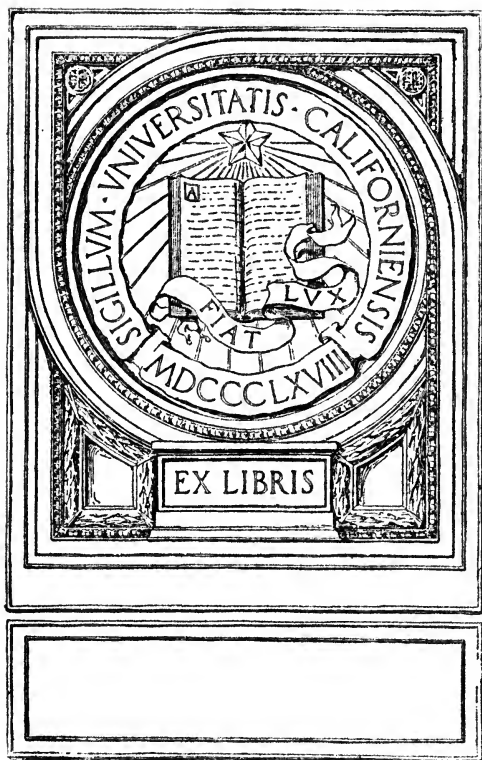


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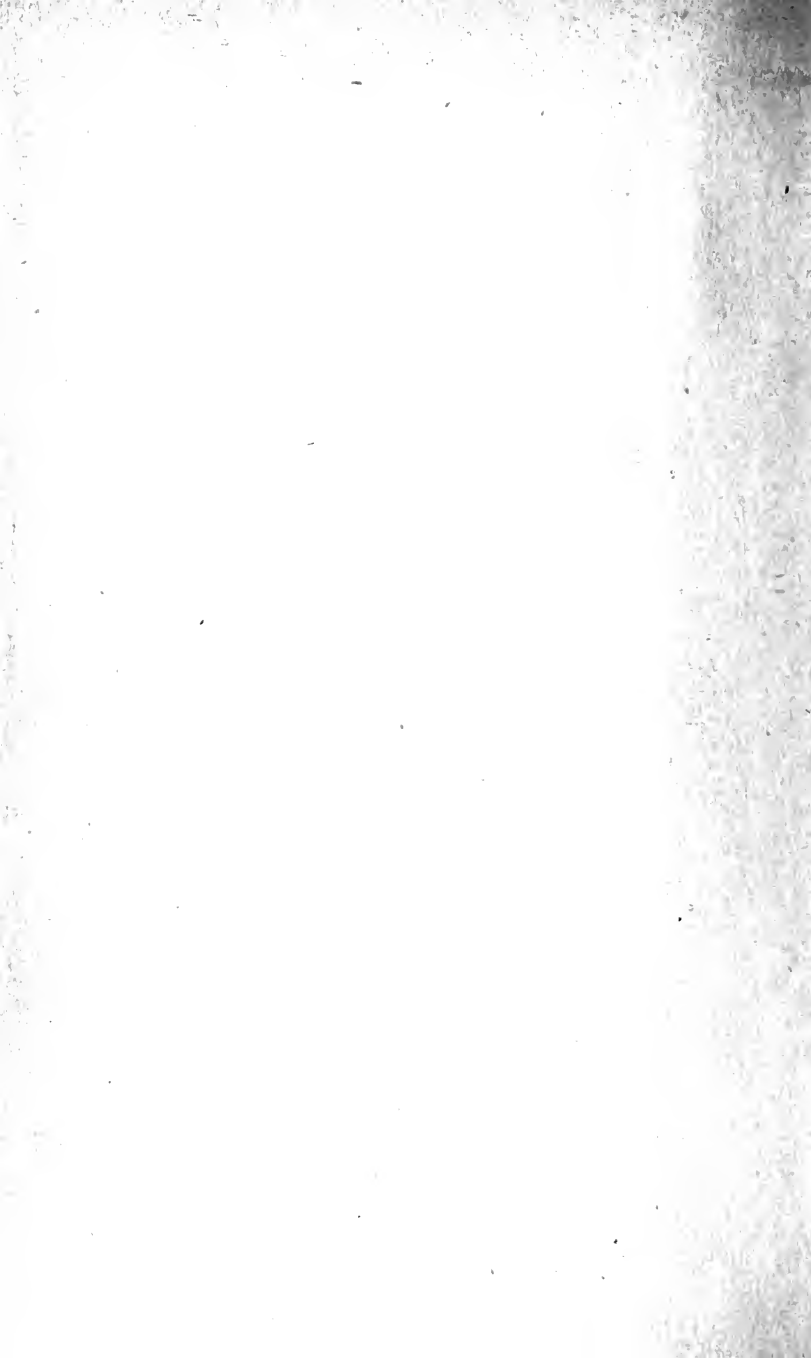


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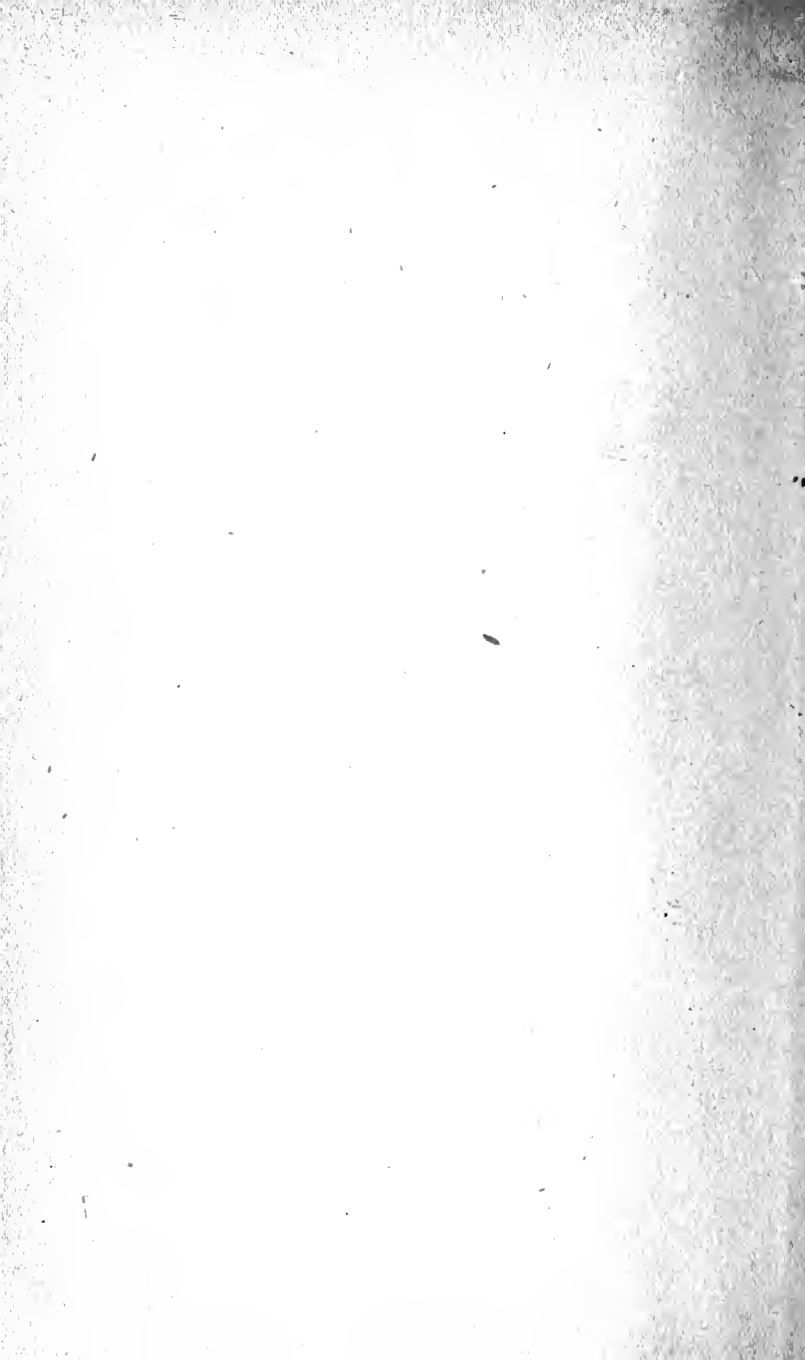


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Poems



P o e m s

BY

Eva Gore-Booth

'Hold the hye wey and lat thy gost thee lede.'—*Chaucer*.



LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.

39 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON

NEW YORK AND BOMBAY

1898

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TO THE
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TO

JULIAN STURGIS

MOST GENEROUS OF ARTISTS AND KINDEST OF FRIENDS

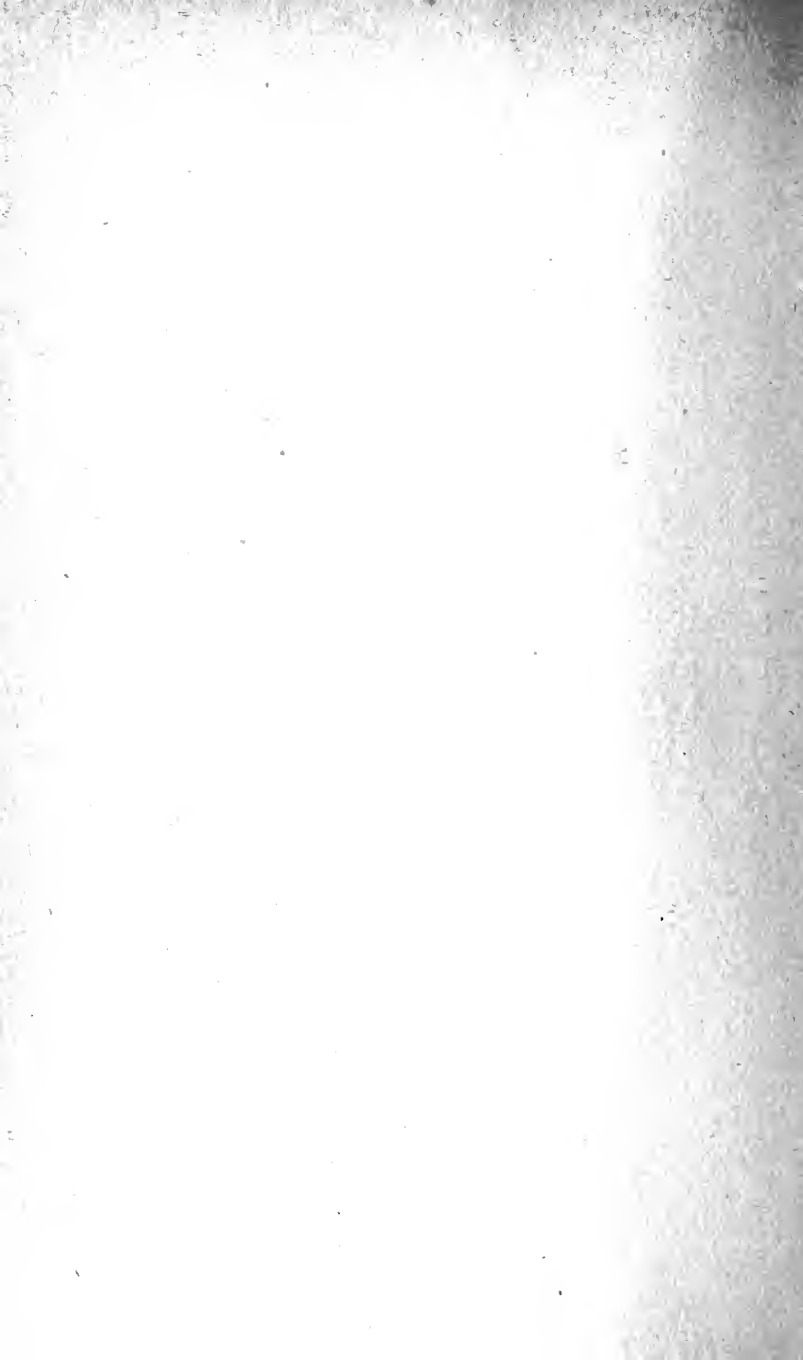
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BY THE AUTHOR

367786

NOTE

SEVERAL of these Poems have appeared in various magazines. For kind permission to have them reprinted, the Author's thanks are due to the Editors of 'The Irish Homestead,' 'Longman's Magazine,' 'Temple Bar,' and the 'Yellow Book.'



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FROM THE GERMAN

(LESSING)

h
If, Reader, for these poems you should lack
All sense of gratitude, all words of praise,
At least you might be thankful for the lays
That I kept back.

A LOVE SONG

LIKE a wave that roams the sea
So lonely and so free,
Like a cloud that haunts the sky,
So distant and so high,
Like the fragrant summer wind,
So gentle and so kind,
Like a castle in the air,
So joyous and so fair,
Like a lily by the wall,
So golden and so tall,
Gay as any flower that blows,
Splendid as a sun-lit rose,
Bright and bravely blossoming,
Is my Lady of the Spring.
Fair of face, and clear of sight,
Living always in the light,
Valorous and free and strong
As the wind's courageous song,
All of magic sunshine made,
Secret as a forest glade,

Silver-lit beneath dark trees
By pale-starred anemones,
Fair as that white dawn that gleams
Through the ivory gate of dreams,
Glorious to gaze upon,
With strange lights of summers gone,
Silver of bright daisies stored,
Smallest change in summer's hoard,
Gold of vanished daffodils,
Is my Lady of the Hills.
The grace of all things gay,
The joy of a swallow's flight,
The light of a summer's day,
The peace of a moon-lit night,
All the strength, and the hope, and the glad-
ness of living are hers,
And her voice is the voice of the wind in
a forest of firs.

IN PRAISE OF LIBERTY

SOME care for glory, some for peace,
 The dying have desire to live ;
 Sad spirits pray for death's release,
 The rest that sleep alone can give ;
 But peace, or strife, or toil, or rest,
 The stir of life, the silent grave—
 I know that Liberty is best,
 And no man sadder than a slave.

And some would see their wealth increase,
 And some would hoard, and some would give,
 And each man has his own caprice,
 And all delight is fugitive ;
 A silken robe, a ragged vest,
 For prince or beggar, fool or knave—
 I know that Liberty is best,
 And no man sadder than a slave.

True lovers, when their kisses cease
 Cannot forget, will not forgive,
 That Love has but a mortal lease,
 A little time to strive and live ;

They cannot stay the parting guest,
They can but curse the joy they crave.
I know that Liberty is best,
And no man sadder than a slave.

For Love is not life's masterpiece,
And Hope has nothing much to give,
And they who find the golden fleece
Do not so greatly care to live ;
Though rich men smile, and saints are blest,
And kings rejoice, and lovers rave,
I know that Liberty is best,
And no man sadder than a slave.

Slave, Love is but a passing jest,
And life the Herald of the Grave ;
Of these three Liberty is best,
And no man sadder than a slave.

ATTAINMENT

I LEFT the brazen tower on the plain,
 And climbed up here through the rain and cold,
 But now I'll never believe again
 The rainbow's promise of faery gold.
 Oh ! better the glad earth's golden green
 Than the fading rainbow's fickle light,
 And better the seen than the unseen,
 The sunny day than the starry night.
 For there 's storm and sorrow and little mirth
 On the hill where the rainbow touches the earth.

Green was the hill from the distant plain,
 The grass was covered with Mary's gold,
 In the brazen tower again and again
 The song was sung and the tale was told ;
 Wonderful songs of the Rainbow Queen
 And her treasure hid from mortal sight,
 The gold deep buried beneath the green,
 And watched by the goblins day and night.
 For there 's gold and glamour and light and mirth
 On the hill where the rainbow touches the earth.

Vain were the words and the warnings vain

Of those phantom faces pale and cold,
Faces of dead men lost or slain

On the bitter quest of the rainbow gold.
How can one fight with a foe unseen ?

So near the sky should one want for light ?
Where an angel's footstep once has been

A star shines out on the darkest night—
For there 's light and hope and the shadow of mirth
On the hill where the rainbow touches the earth.

The sun burns low, on the marshy plain

White fogs hang heavily, dank and cold,
And the brazen tower gleams through the rain,

It gleams and glitters and looks like gold.
Yet here there 's nothing but grey and green,

A barren hill on a windy night,
Not a sight nor sound of the Faery Queen,

Or the buried gold, or the mystic light,
No gladness, nor glory, nor joy, nor mirth,
On the hill where the rainbow touches the earth.

A WELCOME

I, THE ancient King, and guardian of the city,
Crave your justice, noble friend, and trust your
pity ;
When you ride triumphant down the streets at last,
As you trample under foot the gardens of the past,
Be the grass untrodden where the cypress waves,
Leave some roses blooming on your fathers' sombre
graves ;
Cast no flaming torch to burn a house that falls,
Let the ivy hang unhindered from the ruins of its
walls ;
And although you crown your brows, as victors
should, with bays,
Leave the laurels in the churchyard, for the dead
have naught but praise.

PRAYER OF THE MODERN GREEK

HEROES, from the fields of light,
Will ye watch the unequal fight?
Souls who urged the battle on
To victory at Marathon;
Gods who bent from heaven to see
Earth's valley of Thermopylæ,
Laurel-crowned and throned in state,
Free spirits, ye who fought of late
A fight as glorious as this
By sea-surrounded Salamis;
See the incense of our prayer
Dulls the bright Elysian air,
Whilst echoes of our grief and wrong
Still ring across the fields of song.
Hasten, help us, Strong and True,
Surely we have need of you;
Rest no more by lonely streams,
Where Peace amongst her olives dreams,
Go forth, nor linger as you pass,
To gather poppies in the grass,

10 PRAYER OF THE MODERN GREEK

But grasp your rusty swords again,
Ye peaceful ones, for peace is slain.
Placid-browed, indifferent-eyed,
Cast your laurel wreaths aside ;
Let each man take his victor's crown
And fling it down, oh, fling it down !
Let Liberty's coarse cap of red
Flame out athwart your brows instead,
Ye souls of heroes long since dead.

DISILLUSION

WHEN I was young
 The Sirens were most fair ;
 Golden harps and golden hair ;
 In a strange golden tongue
 Their songs were sung.

Now I am old,
 The Muse is all my care ;
 She is more fair
 Than Sirens manifold,
 When one is old.

AN EPITAPH

‘ALAS that every flower is dead !’
These words a smiling angel read
Carven on an ancient stone,
By wild roses overgrown.

REST

ALL day the city's din
Must hem me in,
And thus sublime
At evening time
Comes my release,
Where daisies, white
In the sun's bright light,
All silver pure
The moon endure,
And Heaven allows the stars caprice,
Under grey olive boughs I seek for peace.

THE PILGRIM

Thus did she follow Art,
 Like a starved sparrow,
Picking up every crumb
Dropped on life's muddy road.
 Meanwhile an arrow
Sharp pointed from the gods' abode
 Did quickly come,
And struck her to the heart.

A CRITIC

HIS was the voice
That—when the morning stars together sang
In their first rapture of awakened life
And God's own angels held their breath for joy,
Whilst heaven, by that new harmony entranced,
Was wrapped in awful silence—broke the charm,
Serenely speaking in cold accents thus—
'I know not, yet methinks 'twas Jupiter
Went out of tune and spoilt the whole effect.'

THE MUSICIAN TO HIS LADY

BEHOLD this life's a glorious thing !
Beloved, for thy joyous sake,
I'll write such music as shall make
Sad angels sing.

FROM A FAR COUNTRY

I HAVE such longing to be home again,
'Tis lucky that the Muse
Doth still refuse
To visit me on wingèd Pegasus,
For if she came to see me riding thus
I might be tempted with prosaic force
To steal her horse.

Drudgery itself is a sort of goddess.—SYMONDS.

GODDESS of Drudgery, to thee
I dedicate my hopes and all my days,
Knowing that labour brings no earthly praise
Nor heavenly bliss for guerdon,
 Only this :
The promise of a higher life, to be—
The lightening of life's burden
 Of satiety.

THE REPENTANCE OF EVE

(A PICTURE BY CON GORE-BOOTH)

THIS is our Mother Eve, who shall not win
Respite or peace ; in vain she makes lament
She ate but half the fruit, sinned half the sin,
Eternal hunger is her punishment.

She weeps and mourns for that sweet apple's sake
Whilst high above her in the sacred tree,
Coiled round its withered boughs, the wily snake
Smiles over her lost opportunity.

JOAN OF ARC

THE treasure of age and the hope of youth
And the hidden light of the dreamer's heart,
A treacherous word in the ear of Truth,
The breath of fools on the mirror of Art;
Honour and glory and slander and shame,
These are the golden gifts of Fame.

And the soul that fought for a laurel crown
Shall flaunt it aloft in the victor's car,
But his golden fancies must dwindle down
Like the flames that kindled a burnt out star;
Indolence, safety, a glorious name,
These are the golden gifts of Fame.

But she whose spirit was strong in the strife
Has gained the guerdon that was her due—
The torture of death and the height of life,
The blackness of Hell and the Heaven's blue,
Strength and rapture and sword and flame,
These are the golden gifts of Fame.

A STORM

FROM the jasmine on the wall
Such thick showers of white stars fall,
That the violet at her feet
Shivers in her safe retreat,
Looking upward, blue with fright,
Shudders at the dreadful sight,
Folds her leaves and crouches low,
Hiding from such early snow ;
Nay, it is not Winter yet,
Only Autumn, Violet !

TRIOLET

('L'AMITIÉ EST L'AMOUR SANS AILES ')

If love has lost a wing
 He shall not fly away,
For life has lost a sting
If love has lost a wing,
Though, idly wandering,
 He yet may go astray ;
If love has lost a wing
 He shall not fly away.

TO —

IN lines thus narrow
Your mind can harrow
 The fields of thought,
But never the wheat
Shall grow at your feet ;
You don't know how
To drive the plough,
 You won't be taught ;
You'll find to-morrow,
With heavy sorrow,
 Your harvest naught.

A FABLE

WHEN restless Psyche of the radiant wings
In pity on a drooping lily lit,
She meant to rest a while and gladden it
With light and life and faery flutterings.

This was the sorrow of a summer's morn :
Just then, a laughing child, half mad with play
And sunshine, chased the butterfly away,
And the poor flower was left for aye forlorn.

TO THE PEOPLE ON EARTH

YE tortured mortals, cease your cries,
Ye are but fools who thus forget
That in the centre of your Bridge of Sighs
There is an oubliette !

A SPIRIT IN PRISON

AT midnight on the high sea
A strange voice spoke to me,
Strange eyes gleamed through the blast,
A strange form stood by the mast.
These are the words the phantom spoke :
‘ I was the Dryad of an ancient oak,
‘ My house was deep in the forest glade,
‘ Strong were the walls, green was the shade.
‘ Oh for the life so bright and good,
‘ The long cool grass, the sun-lit wood,
‘ The dear delight of mother earth,
‘ The gladness of her summer mirth,
‘ Beneath my feet her greenery spread,
‘ And great boughs rustling overhead !
‘ Oh for the sheets of shining blue,
‘ Down by the stream where the hyacinths grew !
‘ Now the Naiads dream alone,
‘ And the laurel’s overgrown,
‘ Strangling ivy free to choke
‘ Every unprotected oak ;

‘ Nettles growing long and rank
‘ Straggle up the river bank ;
‘ Unmourned, neglected utterly,
‘ Sweet flowers shed their leaves and die.
‘ Great Phœbus, I would rather now
‘ Be the poor wretch who drives the plough
‘ From morn till even, toiling thus,
‘ In long straight lines monotonous ;
‘ Whose feet have never learnt to stray
‘ From drudgery’s most narrow way ;
‘ Than wander up and down the earth
‘ Bereft of freedom, void of mirth ;
‘ No strife well fought, no battle won,
‘ No sweet rest earned, no labour done.
‘ The ghost of a nymph thus fettered fast
‘ To this ghost of a tree men call a mast.
‘ Tossing always to and fro
‘ Where ever you mortals choose to go,
‘ Thus I live on the wild sea,
 Misery, ah misery ! ’

WEARINESS

AMID the glare of light and song
And talk that knows not when to cease,
The sullen voices of the throng,
My weary soul cries out for peace,
Peace and the quietness of death ;
The wash of waters deep and cool,
The wind too faint for any breath
To stir oblivion's silent pool,
When all who swim against the stream,
And they that laugh, and they that weep,
Shall change like flowers in a dream
That wither on the brows of sleep.

For silence is the song sublime,
And every voice at last must cease,
And all the world at evening time
Floats downwards through the gates of peace,
Beyond the gloom of shadowy caves
Where water washes on the stones,

And breaks with quiet foamless waves
The night's persistent monotones ;
The stars are what the flowers seem,
And where the sea of thought is deep,
The moonlight glitters like a dream,
On weary waters gone to sleep.

PROMISES

SNOWDROPS pushing through the snow
 Already bring,
From nature's quiet grave below
The cold and darkness whence they grow,
 White thoughts of Spring.

A STUDENT

I AM well learned in all the weary lore
Of all the ancients, and my brain is tired ;
Each day I seem to wonder more and more,
Is this great knowledge much to be desired ?

But just two things I'd really like to know—
These childish questions haunt me day and night—
'Where do the spirits of dead people go ?
And, in the darkness, what becomes of light ?'

JANE CLERMONT TO BYRON

Your words are vain.
You wounded me ; the pain was fierce,
 But now at last
 Your power is past,
For, like a wasp, you left your sting
In my sore sorrow festering ;
And thus you lost the means to pierce
 My heart again.

PREOCCUPATION

THUS did our swift boat past the islands glide,
The pleasant islands of Delight and Youth,
Where dwell the Sirens ; as it sped along
He did not even hear their fatal song,
For Orpheus was standing by his side,
Making sweet music of an unknown truth.

ASPIRATIONS

EELS in the mud of the garden pond,
Do you ever think of a life beyond,
Do you ever see that the sky is blue,
And wish that the moon was nearer you?
Do you ever sigh when the skylark sings,
And dream of wings?

AN AUTHOR

HE wrote all day, he could not think,
His very blood was turned to ink,
He burned with endless patient toil
Whole gallons full of midnight oil—
A sort of Paper Chase sublime

He ran with Time.

Methinks he strewed the scent too thick,
Time caught him, he grew old and sick;
He ran too fast, he lost his breath
And fell an easy prey to death.

AN OLD STORY

A MAIDEN loved Diogenes,
Well she thought the sage to please,
But he did not understand her,
Treated her like Alexander ;
To all her blandishments replied,
' Gracious Maiden, stand aside,
When your pleasant talk is done
I would see the blessed sun.'
After such cross words as these,
Still she loved Diogenes.

TRICOLOR

IN liberty of thought,
Equality of life,
The generations sought
A rest from hate and strife.

Hard work on common ground,
Strong arms and spirits free,
In these at last they found
Fraternity.

A DISCOVERY

HOPE and Life came to the well
Where dwelt the toad Despair,
They said, 'It's deep, and who can tell
If truth lies buried there.'
They stirred the bottom with a stick,
They sought for Truth's abode,
And only found the mud was thick,
And in it lived a Toad.

DIE RHEINBAHN

Als sie beendet war,
Ein junger Fischer sah,
Im hellen Mondenschein,
Von ihrem Fels, mit wild Geschrei,
Das schönste Mädchen Lorelei
Sich toll hinunter stürzen in den Rhein.

A POLITICIAN

‘OH, Sisyphus, a weary life is yours
Of endless toil and unrewarded pain.’
‘Not so, my friend,’ said he ;
‘I toil to push my stone uphill, of course,
But then I rest, and there’s a sight to see :
Each time, with right good will,
The stone turns slowly on the hill,
Although I rolled it up with all my force,
The little impish schoolboy in my brain
Chuckles to watch it rattling down again.’

DEAD LEAVES

Is this what it means to die—
Free and fair, powers of the air,
On the wings of the wind to fly—
Bold and bright, in sheets of light
Out of the shaken sky ;
Over the wold in showers of gold
Stricken of colours manifold,
Shattered and scattered left to lie—
Is this what it means to die ?

Is this what it means to die—
Round and round, down to the ground,
Floating and falling helplessly,
Gold in the dust as dead things must,
Wet and sodden, or hard and dry,
Footsteps drowned in a rustling sound,
Sweet to the feet of the passer by ;
To soar like gods for a space, and then
To be trodden underfoot of men,
Prostrate thus in the dust to lie—
Is this what it means to die ?

MORNING GLORY

PERFECTLY pure and pale, a thing apart,
Where long rank grass and common hedge flowers
grow,
Most like a star cast down from Heaven thou art,
Here, by the dusty wayside, lying low
With one brown earth stain at thy radiant heart.

A NIGHTMARE

I WROTE eight verses late last night,
And slept, and lo ! a wondrous sight,
There came eight funerals instead
Marching slowly past my bed.
As they went each nodding plume
Swayed and rhymed across the gloom.

 In the twinkling of an eye,
The whole procession passed me by,
And every verse—became a hearse
 To carry murdered poetry.

TO A POET

No voices speak to thee—
No visions shalt thou see—
The very sunset thou shalt know
But in its fading afterglow.
In thy mind's secret place
Is neither light, nor song, nor grace—
Foolish echoes, void of sound,
Wander o'er the stony ground.
In such an arid desert set,
Music doth her truth forget ;
And in her highest rapture croons
But snatches of remembered tunes.
Think'st thou that life shall cast divine
Pearls before such feet as thine ?
Strive as well thou mayest strive—
Thou art only half alive.
Ah, God ! the sounds unheard,
The whispered word,
The songs unsung
By mortal tongue,

The shaft of light,
Straight from the low sun's golden bow,
No power shall throw
Across thy spirit's night,
Nor any life, nor beauty, shalt thou know,
But endless echoes, and an afterglow !

A SONG

I SING the song of the river,
That mirrors the shallow stars,
While misty moonbeams shiver
Behind their cloudy bars ;
The stars, in mystic dances,
Flicker and flash and gleam,
To woo with their burning glances
The icy-hearted stream.

A voice of siren gladness
Floats clear across the sky,
And kindles into madness
The river's melody.
For heaven's fairest daughters
Are singing like love-sick maids,
To waken the sleepy waters
With starry serenades.

These cunning, clear-voiced Pleiads
Shine out so near, they seem
To lie like white-armed Naiads
On the breast of the loving stream ;
The song of the starry seven
Floats down in waves of light
Across the vaults of heaven
And through the shades of night.

I sing the song of the showers
That fall on the river's breast,
Forsaking their cloudy towers
Away in the gleaming west ;
They whisper the secret story
How fair, on far-off heights,
The stars, in lonely glory,
Burn cold, deceitful lights.

The river laughs in their faces,
Despising their fickle play,
Now he knows their airy graces
Are thousands of miles away ;
And they will not leave the beauty
And light of heaven above,
For a doubtful earthly duty,
And a humble earthly love.

I sing the song of the rushes,
That bend o'er the river and pry
To read its heart as it gushes
In musical gladness by.
It ripples over the shingle,
And passes in laughter away,
To where its waters mingle
With the ocean of yesterday.

'AN IDYLL'

(A Picture by MAURICE GREIFFENHAGEN.)

IN the twilight land of gleams,
Through the dusky waves of corn,
Where the scarlet sunset dreams
Languid of the morrow morn ;
Where the poppies nod and smile,
Climbing slowly, one by one,
Past the bank, beyond the stile,
Up to meet the setting sun.
Let us wander on and on,
As the dreamy poppies do,
Till the silent night is gone,
And we meet the morning blue.

If we wander very far,
We shall find that distant land,
Where the rainbow jewels are
Buried deep beneath the sand.
Dreamy eyes and gleaming hair,
Where are gems that flash and shine

Like those jewels rich and rare
On the breast of Proserpine.
For we toil not, must not weep,
Cannot feel your scorn,
In the arms of love and sleep,
Dreaming through the corn.

So they wandered through the fields,
Till they came at last to Life,
Holding up two golden shields
And her poisoned sword of strife.
And they would have passed her by,
But she lifted up her head
With a passing weary sigh,
And reluctantly she said :
' You must toil and you must weep
Bear my love and scorn,'
Far from where the poppies sleep,
Nodding through the corn.

' Take these heavy golden shields,
Wake and gird yourselves to fight,
Leave the dreamy poppy fields
And the dreary shades of night.'
But he flung the shield aside,
Down the sword of life she cast,

Dreamily he clasped his bride,
Dreamily they floated past.
Plucked the poppies, rich and red,
Bound them round the brows of life ;
'Come and rest with us,' they said,
'Rest from all your barren strife.'

So Life followed, poppy crowned,
Steeped in blissful sleep,
And her eyes, grown strange and round,
Quite forgot to weep.
Thus they wander on and on,
As the holy spirits may ;
Change is past, and time is gone,
Till they meet the coming day--
For they toil not, cannot weep,
Feel not any scorn,
In the arms of love and sleep,
Dreaming through the corn.

SONG OF THE FAIR EXILE

In this cold country of the seas
The hills are gray, the mist is white ;
My very spirit seems to freeze,
I shut my eyes on such a sight.
Then all about me everywhere
Golden lilies float and dance ;
My God, I wish that I were there—
The sun shines joyously in France !

In Scotland, people never smile,
'Tis months since I have heard a song ;
They tell me I am very vile,
And everything I do is wrong.
There's nothing left but psalms and prayer,
The folk don't even care to dance ;
My God, I wish that I were there—
Men live so joyously in France !

'Tis true that here I live in state,
At home I've many foes, they say,
Yet surely 'twere a noble fate
To die thus free and young and gay ;

Death comes to all, why should I care ?

I think I'll go and take my chance,
And if they murder me out there—

Well, folk die happily in France.

Gold fetters bind my hands and feet,

Men bow before me very low,
And soldiers stand behind my seat,

They follow me where'er I go.

My guards take such unceasing care

To save me from each evil chance,

I often think in blank despair—

I'll never get to Heaven, or France !

Yet sometimes, for long hours, I stand

And gaze and wonder at the sea ;
And think of that fair distant land,

The only Paradise for me !

Among the vines and olives there

In sunshine all my spirits dance,

My God, the South is very fair,

Some day, I shall go back to France.

Yon golden lilies, flowers of light,

Still folded in the dark away,

Shall flaunt yet in a nation's sight,

Sun-gilded on that glorious day

When all about us everywhere,
The people laugh and sing and dance ;—
My God, I wish that I were there,
Safe home at last in sunny France.

.

THE EXILE'S RETURN

You are old and I am young,
Fling high the golden ball,
Bells of joy for all are rung,
The sun shines on us all.
Rain fell heavily last night,
Ah, but now the world is bright !
Let us laugh and sing and dance,
For the sun shines fair in France.
And the rainy night is done,—
Forward, Children of the Sun !

Though the orange blossom's dead
And withered petals fall,
Fling gold oranges instead,
The sun shines on us all !
Here we are at home again,
Past is our long dream of pain ;
Let us laugh and sing and dance
Though all flowers are dead in France :
Yet the day of death is done,
For the Children of the Sun.

Though you people cannot sing,
Yet catch the golden ball,
There's a skylark on the wing,
The sun shines on us all.
Shines athwart the fitting breeze,
On green vines and olive trees,
Clasp your hands, my friends, and dance,
Golden oranges of France,
Life and liberty are won,
By the Children of the Sun.

Scotland may be gray with cold,
Let hail or snowstorms fall,
Here the world is green and gold,
The sun shines on us all.
Wave the flags and ring the bells,
Out of Scottish dungeon cells
Here we come to sing and dance,
Back to liberty and France.
Joy and freedom should be one
To the Children of the Sun.

Though the roses all are dead,
Fling high the golden ball,
Golden lilies bloom instead,
The sun shines on us all.

Earth shall echo with the shout
As we shake the banner out ;
Round the flag of Freedom dance,
Splendid fleur-de-lys of France !
Life and liberty are one
For the Children of the Sun !

CLOUDS

DROOPING over Ireland, veiled in sombre gray,
See the sky is weeping all its light away ;
Heedless of the magic music of the spheres
Drooping over Ireland, land of falling tears.

Land of falling tears and broken promises ;
Land of idle slaves and famine and distress,
Land of crime and struggle, and of futile strife,
Land of acquiescence, land without a life !

See amid the shadows where dead Ireland lies,
Justice stands, the future flashes from her eyes :
After thy new birth of travail and of pain,
Rise, she says, dead nation, live and hope again.

Nay, not dead but sleeping ; surely she shall wake,
In her mighty hands her life and honour take,
Drink the wine of courage, break the bread of life,
Bear the sword of Freedom foremost in the strife.

Soon above those mountains clothed in sombre
gray

Joyous winds shall scatter clouds and mists away ;
Ireland's sun is shining, strong and free again,
And her fields are all the greener for the rain.

A TRAITOR.

You think that I was false for guerdon or for gold,
 Nay, friends, I was not bought by such a base
 reward ;

Whose fingers smote and rang out, fearlessly, of old
 Steel music, and the clashing rhythms of the
 sword.

Nay, how could I have cared for any golden chain
 Beneath that hateful medal shining on my breast,
 My conquered heart beats on in sobs of smothered
 pain,

I mourn for my lost faith, I cannot sleep nor rest.
 They did not try a bribe, they were too wise for
 that,

They said, 'It's only just to hear the other side.'
 I wish that they had turned and stabbed me where
 I sat :

No traitor, your true friend I should have lived
 and died.

And now that I have left you, your young men have
 dared

Their fickle friend and leader daily to revile—

I am 'he whose avarice all his soul ensnared,'
'Who feigned to love, like Judas, hating all the
while.'

Nay, friends, can you not fancy, did you never find
The foe that slays and spares not all you hold
most dear,

Your enemy, your heart's worst traitor, your own
mind ?

For this is life's last strife, that all men born must
fear ;

With reason for a sword the mind goes forth to fight,
The Heart's fair citadel is guarded by love's wall,
Strange thoughts fly thick and fast, winged arrows
swift as light,

The feelings yield, the fight is o'er, the towers
fall,

And death, death, death, to those who flee or yield,

Death to the vanquished, mercy is not there ;

Cold lies the dead heart on the battle field,

Food for that bitter worm men call Despair.

'Tis death, death, death, and this is death indeed,

Lay the slain powers in a soldier's grave—

Now is the martial mind for ever freed ;

See o'er the dead her glorious standard wave—

Fair flag of freedom, splendid star of Truth,

I will follow ever where thy beams are shed ;

Yea, though they light me to the grave of youth,

And shine athwart pale faces newly dead.

Hope for the morrow, faith in what shall be,
Trust in the spirit's striving that ascends
To hard-earned life, far stronger and more free
Than all your long lost love, my scornful friends.
'Tis life, life, life, the battle on the height—
The wand'rer groping through the pathless wood—
The patient following of a far-off light—
The fight for freedom and for brotherhood.
And if the darkness ever fades away,
And in fair light we friends together stand,
I think that I can promise in that day
You shall not scorn to wring a traitor's hand ;
For light, light, light is all we want on earth,
Hearts were not hard if only eyes could see,
We who are blind and selfish from our birth
Are wrapped about with clouds and mystery.
But light, light, light, we pray for all mankind
A ray of sunshine on the churchyard sod,
Fire in each heart—a torch in every mind,
A star among the shadows veiling God !

AN EPITAPH

O God, I thank Thee that all things must end,
 That soon pale life shall strive and cry no more,
 That Death tears down the veil Faith cannot rend,
 And wide before me stands an open door !
 That Thou hast given to pain a potent sword,
 And, building all the mansions of the Blest,
 Hast still created in Thy mercy, Lord,
 Before the House of Death, a Gate of Rest.
 And thou, my friend and comrade, hold my hand,
 Here on the threshold in the fading light
 Watch by my side, together let us stand
 And hearken to the voices of the night.
 Write thou these words in ashes, nay, embroider them
 In gold and purple, a phylactery
 Of pious thoughts, sewn round the vesture's hem
 Of that pale ghost, fast-fading Memory :
 ' He was a slave, fast bound to Fortune's wheel,
 A saint, who strove in vain to serve the Lord—
 A sufferer whom no human art could heal—
 A soldier fighting with a broken sword—

He was a sinner, whom may God forgive
In pity on his life-long misery ;
By his own heart betrayed he feared to live,
By his own hand destroyed he dared not die !
Oh, listen, ye who stand upon the higher slope,
And strain against the world's low prison bars,
And climb the rugged mountain tops of Hope
Seeking for Joy amongst the barren stars.
Ye, who would probe the secrets of the night—
Fret not yourselves, ye go but whence ye came ;
Climb ye by faith who have no clearer light,
Back to the silent land without a name.
Thus be assured that Peace shall come at last
Though Hope be dead, and Faith grow cold and
strange,
And all your years of endless life be past—
Bow yourselves to the changeless law of change.
Nay, when the wind's voice in the wilderness
Prepares the way for winter, scattering
Sweet memories of summer's long caress,
And all the broken promises of Spring,
Have ye not felt the first faint shudder pass
Right through the garden ; seen the daisies sink
Their blushing faces deeper in the grass,
Whilst high above them stricken lilies shrink,
Each white-faced martyr bound upon a stake.
The coward wind may stab them as it will,
They know not how to bend, they cannot break,
They can but wither slowly and be still.

See where the hollyhocks, a gaudy row,
Stand up erect against the darkening sky,
Flaunting so bravely lest the wind should know
The secret of their burnt-up agony ;
They too can bear their burden, undismayed,
The hidden anguish and the secret stain,
It is not only lilies that must fade
Or chastened martyrs who can suffer pain ;
Sinner and saint still languish side by side—
Virgin and harlot must alike endure—
To what man's life is misery denied ?
Few can be martyrs, Death is always sure.
Think ye that Christ alone in torment died,
Whilst all the careless world stood round to see ?
What of the thieves so justly crucified,
One at each side of him on Calvary ?
Who does not suffer, who shall enter in
The narrow path that leadeth unto life
Without the knowledge gained through death and
sin,
Unsanctified by grief and bitter strife ?
Has not for man's salvation pain sufficed ?
Those who with Him in torture drew their breath,
Stand now for ever face to face with Christ,
Ennobled thus and glorified by death,
Thus bound together by a common woe,
Scorn of despair and loss, contempt of gain,

The only Christian brotherhood we know
Is Christ's eternal brotherhood of Pain.
All men are equal, yet in this alone
The spirit lives, the body perisheth ;
Amid the darkness of the blind unknown
We feel the austere equality of death.
Freedom is fair, yet is no spirit free,
Bound and constrained by every linked nerve
Of this great chain of flesh ; for liberty
Is but the power to labour and to serve
Unlimited, unfettered, unrestrained
By the heart's weakness and the failing breath ;
Only through pain is perfect peace attained,
And life's ideal reached at last by death.
Who are ye, then, that ye should stand alone
Above the grovelling crowd serene and high,
In the calm cloudland of the fair unknown,
Building your golden stair to scale the sky ?
Can ye throw back the sunset gates of flame,
And gaze deep down into the Heaven's blue ?
And write across the sky God's Holy Name,
So that all men may know that He is true ?
Nay, then, come down from these your lonely
heights,
Give up the holy joys of solitude,
And stars and storms, and all divine delights ;
Now the coarse faces of the multitude

Must be to you as once was nature's face,

For the unfailing good, the changeless law of right,
Do battle in the crowded market place—

I, the dead coward, bid you heroes fight ;
And ye who dwell among the valleys, glad

With the earth's gladness and the youth of things,
Care not, though youth shall fail and all the joys ye
had

Fly from the rustling of death's mighty wings ;
Though love be very fair and deep your life's
delight,

Yet rest is fairer, and the grave as deep ;
Hearken unto the voices of the night,
Shall there be any bliss like this of sleep ?

FINGER POSTS

I

THIS is the way of Heaven : you may kneel
 And beat your breast for hours in futile prayer.
 No faint light flickers on the golden stair,
 No hand draws back the curtains that conceal
 That land of shadows men imagine fair,
 And the beloved shade who wanders there
 Invisible, no power shall reveal.
 Men talk of all the strength of love and faith ;
 Vain words and false, it is an idle boast
 To dream we hold communion with a ghost,
 Or bring to earth again a vanished wraith.
 No shadow answers to a shadow's call,
 This is the way of all things spiritual.

II

This is the way of Nature, as of old,
 When from the primal darkness first there grew
 Flowers, and the sun shone and all the sky was
 blue,
 And life's bright promises were manifold,

Her hidden wealth is now as then untold ;
 He who digs deep enough shall find her true,
 Each miner gains at last his honest due
Of her great buried store of gems and gold.
This is the way of Earth : she hears the call
 Of every ploughman's prayer ; the labourer,
 If he be worthy, has his will of her
From the deep furrows where the good seeds
 fall.
She brings forth hope, and all the life that clings
Round the strong patience of material things.

III

This is the way of Sorrow : wearily
 Should one set out with such a weary guide ;
 The path is narrow and the world is wide,
And no man knoweth any reason why.
And yet 'tis foolishness to strive or cry,
 The doom must fall on whom the gods decide,
 They walk with pain for ever at their side,
Through her long wilderness of mystery.
Yet though sweet sorrow hath few words to say,
 A dull companion on a lonely road ;
Yea, though she hath not faith enough to pray ;
 And on life's shoulders binds a heavy load,
Her heart is true, her footsteps shall not stray.
She leads at last unto the gods' abode.

IV

This is the way of Joy : the artist knows
The secret that makes all things fresh and fair.
She gives a fragrance to the summer air,
And, flashing by where life's dull river flows,
She shakes the languor of its slow repose,
And drives it, scattering music everywhere,
Up to the foot of Heaven's golden stair,
Through the wild tangles of the mystic rose ;
There, in the shade beside the river's bed,
She rests awhile, and dabbles in the stream—
Till down the giddy mazes of her dream
She finds the little peaceful hour has fled.
Then forth into the startled sky she springs
With swift wet feet, and shining golden wings.

V

This is the way of Life when Joy has fled :
She passes through a wilderness of cloud,
And, wrapped in music for a mimic shroud,
She comes unto the dwellings of the Dead.
No river now, a mournful nymph instead,
By Joy's short sojourn with a soul endowed,
She seeks for her among the nameless crowd
That throng the gateway of the Halls of Dread—
Seeks for the long-lost Joy, the light divine,
The Paradise that she shall never win—

Content at last, and glad to enter in
Despair's abode, and rest with Proserpine,
Sorrow, whose eyes are dark with unshed tears,
And all the ghostly company of fears.

VI

This is the way of Love : a ray of light
In the mid forest through the foliage shines,
And makes green shadows of the serried pines,
Bringing a secret pathway into sight,
Where two may walk alone in their delight,
And half in darkness : for the thick set lines
Of mighty trees their narrow road confines
With the black limits of enshrouding night.
Yet has the forest fortress failed in strength ;
Swift windy beams split through the leafy screen,
And pierce the heavy shroud of waving green,
Until the narrow pathway feels at length
The strength of sunshine and the light of rain,
And broadens out into the open plain.

VII

This is the road of Hope, that some men call
The way of Love, far out of human sight,
Amid strange mansions of austere delight :
A way of shadows, pale, æthereal,

High among stars and storms, outsoaring all
The silent glories of each lonely height,
Above the tumult of the windy night,
Beyond the bounds of Heaven's cloudy wall,
Still God's calm splendour shineth overhead,
The great white way where light and gladness
are ;

This is the Joy of earth transfigurèd,
Set high in heaven, very faint and far ;
The glorious Highway of the holy Dead,
The path of Love from star to scattered star.

HYMN

‘The wind bloweth where it listeth. . . . So is everyone that is born of the Spirit.’

HOLY SPIRIT, force of light,
Soul of beauty out of sight,
Height of light and depth of pain,
Golden sunshine after rain ;
Shivering seas and winds that glide,
Shadows on the mountain side,
All things swift and all things strong,
Life and colour, hope and song,
Are Thine, O Lord Divine.
Freedom of the winds that fly
Through waste spaces of the sky,
Freedom of the thoughts that range
On from change to endless change,
Force of life that shall not yield,
Victor on the battle-field,
Lightning winged, and fire shod,
Freedom of the laws of God ;

Spirit born of liberty,
If the truth can make us free,
In the power of the whole
Of the world's impatient soul,
Strive with us when we aspire
In the strength of self-restraint,
To the land above desire,
And the life beyond constraint
Of the saint.

SONNET

THEY who rise satiate from Life's banquet, spread
With mystic providence of food and wine,
Would worship something for an outward sign
That they are grateful, being fully fed.
Thus do they reverence golden calves instead
Of God, and all high thoughts resign,
Mistake abundance for the life Divine,
Fulfilment for the secret of the dead.
They shall not probe the mysteries of pain,
The primal truths, whose feet have never trod
Life's barren wilderness of strife and strain,
Nor learnt among her solitudes that God
Not Satan is the spirit that denies,—
The life and essence of self-sacrifice.

A SOLDIER

‘ Young knight, go forth and slay
The Dragon while ’tis day,
For soon the sun will set
On your most vain regret,
That no fair deed is done
Ere set of sun.’

‘ Nay, rather would I fight
In darkness,’ said the knight,
‘ Than go forth unprepared
Unto my work, ensnared
By reckless vanity,
To do or die.

‘ My sword not sharp enough,
My armour sorry stuff,
My horse half trained and wild,
Defenceless as a child
And immature,
Defeat were sure.’

‘ Yet doth the snake alway
Such harmless people slay,
And work his wicked will,
The while you linger still,
Jousting and throwing spears
Through youth’s best years.

‘ And all your blows ring hard,
Sham fighting in the yard ;
I pray you waste no time,
The battle joy sublime
Is life to men like you.
Bold hearts are few.’

The soldier answered not,
But still his blows fell hot
And thick ; his way he rent
Through the mad tournament ;
Long strove he undismayed
To learn his trade.

But when strong-armed he rode
At last from his abode,
The country people said,
‘ Behold, the Dragon’s dead.
For all your warlike state,
You are too late.

‘ A knight unknown to fame,
A braver warrior, came
Across the sea to do
The deed God meant for you.
Thus has a stranger’s sword
Earned your reward ! ’

He smiled. ‘ Shall I repine
For fame that is not mine,
And grudge with childish greed
Another man his deed ?
Mourn at the sight of this
Brave brother’s bliss ?

‘ Whilst still beneath the sun
There’s work for every one,
And never yet was knight
Who found no foe to fight,
No sword did ever lack
Some skull to hack ! ’

‘ As long as hearts are wrung,
As long as songs are sung,
Whilst still the Star of Hope
Reigns in Life’s horoscope,
The whole world through
There’s work to do.’

'Then forth strong armed I go
To meet an unknown foe,
An unknown friend to save,
And fill an unknown grave.
Thank God, the world is wide
Through which I ride !

'Forward through field and wood,
To some far goal of good,
Content if by the way
Some evil thing I slay ;
Dreaming, when life seems hard,
Of Joyous Gard.'

I know not how he fared
Who was so well prepared,
Nor if the tales were true,
Of giants that he slew,
Of deeds of valour done,
And battles won.

Of hardships well endured,
And captives fast immured
He set at liberty—
Such things as these may be—
Right well I know he did his best—
Sweet be his rest !

FEBRUARY AT ADARE

BENEATH a mist of dog-wood buried deep,
Here, as I passed along the riverside,
I found the Spring low-laid in blissful sleep,
Entranced she seemed, yet watching open-eyed
The deep brown pools that lie beneath the stream
Like great thoughts hidden in a misty dream,
The shadowy fishes darting to and fro,
And all the wintry sunshine come and go.
She seemed as one about to wake, who lingers
Yet on the blessed borderland of consciousness,
Her hair streamed down between her clasped fingers,
And fell upon the stream like a caress,
To make a little passing stir and shiver
In the cool surface of the lazy river.
You might have thought her dead, so still she lay,
This sleeping beauty, whom the tyrannous time
Had left to dream the ice-bound hours away
In calm despair or confidence sublime.
The laurel wreathed about her sunken head
Its sickly fragrance through the bower shed ;

All round here there had grown a magic ring,
Enchanted snowdrops, whitely blossoming,
Planted by faery hands long time ago,
Perfect alike in beauty and in number,
Bore witness to the pureness of her slumber ;
Unstained of sinfulness, undimmed by woe,
Passed by of fear, untouched by joy or sorrow,
Serene she waits life's call and God's divine to-
morrow.

A CHOICE

IN His Rainbow Garden, God
 Made the Spirit of the Spring,
 The very sunshine on the sod
 Rose to greet her, seemed to sing,
 As she openèd her eyes
 In the Flower's Paradise.
 On the morning of her birth
 He gave her leave to pluck a flower
 From his Rainbow Garden bower,
 To take with her down to earth.
 The Spirit chose

No gaudy rose ;
 She passed where lilies blossomed fair,
 Making sweet the fields of air,
 Golden sunflowers in vain
 Called to her to turn again ;
 When her scent-compelling feet
 Trod violets, she found them sweet,
 And passed the fragrant flowers by,
 And hurried down the Eastern sky ;

Till by Heaven's utmost wall
She met the Dawn, who, as she went,
Scattered blossoms, letting fall
A glory through the firmament.
Down like a faded star she threw,
Laughing softly all the while,
A primrose drenched in light and dew,
The very spirit of her smile.
Then was Spring astonishèd,
She caught the pale delight and fled
To where, on the horizon's verge,
Heaven and earth in dreamland merge,
And the silver April showers
Scatter music through the skies ;
There she found no garden flowers,
Nor any bird of Paradise,
But an earthly skylark sang,
And Heaven's weeds were growing wild,
Then through the Rainbow's arch there rang
The laughter of an eager child,
As, roaming o'er the Eastern hills,
She gathered common daffodils.

SWEET PEAS

TO MABEL

SWEET peas! The very life of Spring
 Stirs each frail wing
 To a diviner colour, fair
 As the first glimmering
 Of moonlight in a spirit's hair.
 Sweet with the essence of unfolding flowers,
 Fresh with the fragrance of the morning hours,
 Bury thy face deep down in dreams of these,
 Sweet Peas!
 Lift up thy heart to the divine delight
 Of their frail flight;
 Be thy life stirred by subtle airs
 Like theirs,
 To the faint music of the coloured dream
 They seem!
 The liquid light that paints the early sky,
 Ere in the noonday it grows cold and dry,
 Is yours, fair flowers, yours are the sunny ways
 Of sweet spring days;
 As frozen earth, the while she sleeps below
 This cruel sky grown white with thoughts of snow,

Dreaming a dream of colour, seems to see
The glory and the green that soon shall be,
So does my heart, sweet peas,
Though it may freeze,
Long for the sun to warm it through and through,
Dream of the touch of God's own colour blue,
And wandering through Fancies garden beds,
Where ghosts of blasted rose trees droop their
heads
And weep down icicles instead of dew,
Gain gladness from the very thoughts of you.

LAMENT

OH, the streak of gold in the gray,
And the sun's first ray of light,
And the fresh cold air of the day
On the burning cheek of night,
And the winds that shake as they pass
The glory of piled-up sheaves,
The shadow of wings on the grass,
And the rustle of autumn leaves,
Are as songs that are out of fashion
That no man loves or sings,
Since life in the fire of passion
Has blackened her rainbow wings.

The glory of struggle and strain—
The joy of the world at morn,
The light of the falling rain,
The strength of the growing corn,
A smile that transfigures the Truth,
The sound of a voice that sings,
The glory and gladness of youth,
And the splendour of obvious things,
The songs that were dear to the singer,
Dead and devoid of mirth

Are lost to the gods in heaven
And voices of men upon earth.

For the star of our hope burns faint,
And the light of the world grows dim,
As the halo that crowns a saint,
Or the notes of a vesper hymn ;
And thoughts are too bitter for words,
And the silence grows and grows
And there's never a song from the birds,
Nor a scent from the dying rose ;
And fear in the soul of a nation
Makes dreadful a noble strife,
Whilst death, with a cold negation,
Has broken the heart of life.

Yet the sun still gladdens the sky,
And the giddy stars endure,
For the end is not yet nigh,
The meaning is still obscure ;
Doomed spirits, unwilling to die,
Can murmur still as they pass
Into Silence and Mystery,
' Perhaps,' as well as ' Alas ' ;
For still the delight of colour
Lies blue on the distant hills,
And the air of spring's all golden
With sunshine and daffodils.

La mort est le baiser de Dieu.

PAIN is the price of freedom we must pay,
 Wrapped in the pride of our most noble birth,
 Cut off from all the brotherhood of earth,
We fret and struggle through our little day,
And senselessly despise the senseless clay,
 Yet in the spring time feel but little mirth,
 And wonder whether what we gain is worth
The gift of peace, so lightly cast away ;—
The silence and the strange unconscious life
 Of flowers and trees, deep rooted, strongly bound
 Beneath the base dominion of the ground,
So near to nature, calm amid the strife
Of forces, life's degrading fight for breath,
And all the noble quietness of death.

SONNET

STRONG spirit, striving upward to the light,
Soul of the world, half smothered in its dust
Breath of the battle, life's despairing trust,
In progress and hope's golden wingèd flight !
Where art thou, spirit ? Vainly through the night
We call. Thy sword is eaten up with rust—
We know that thou art strong as thou art just,
Why hast thou wholly vanished from our sight ?
The Spirit works in darkness, secretly,
Among the hidden depths and roots of things,
Down in those caverns where no skylark sings,
But germs of power and buried forces lie.
Have patience, when all flags of hope are furled,
Still there is courage in the under world !

THE ABBOT'S EPITAPH

' THE summary of a good man's life,
 ' The record of his earthly strife,
 ' A holy message to his heirs
 ' Beseeching for their constant prayers ;
 ' A voice of warning and of doom
 ' Out of the silence of the tomb,
 ' So deep anon.
 ' Such things as these I mean to write
 ' Ere I go forth into the night,
 ' With my last breath they shall be said
 ' And carved in marble o'er my head,'
 Said Father John.
 ' That every passer by may see
 ' That Death is Life's epitome
 ' When I am gone.'

The Mass was sung, the prayers were said,
 We came about his dying bed,
 And prayed the most beloved of men
 To tell his mourning children then,

Whilst still he flickered to and fro
'Twixt Life and Death prepared to go,
 Yet lingering on,
What those most sacred words might be
Of the long written Elegy,
The Holy Rede that should be read,
Carved in the marble o'er his head,
 When he was gone.
He turned his face away from us
 'Miserrimus, miserrimus !'
Said Father John.

SHUT OUT

'Twas hard to bear,
For years to wander thus and wait
Amid pale shadows of half real despair
In the dull road outside the Ivory Gate.
All round my feet the pansies grew
Nodding their wise heads to and fro
Mocking faces gold and blue
Seemed to whisper ' No, No, No,
No thoroughfare.'

How strange it seems,
Now round me poppies blossom red,
Low at my feet the river gleams,
Great beech boughs rustle overhead ;
Pansies, you mocked me all in vain,
Light flowers who did not understand,
Fade on outside, I live again,
And labour in the magic land
Of Light and Dreams.

PETTY LARCENY

LIVED a man was wont to steal
Oysters for his daily meal,
He broke them open with a stone,
And ate them on the shore alone.
One day he had not strength enough,
Or else the shell was very tough,
He struggled till he sprained his wrist,
E'en then the knave did not desist,
But forced the oyster open wide
And found a glorious pearl inside !

MONOTONY

Oh, poor, pale days that pass me by
 Thus one by one !
With neither tempest nor blue sky,
 Nor wind nor sun.
Glad without smiles, and sad without a sigh,
 Beloved of none :
Content to fade away and die
 At set of sun.
With neither stars nor flowers nigh,
Nor evening breeze nor sunset sky
 When day is done.

TRANSMIGRATION—A NIGHTMARE

Down in the darkness of his damp abode
I heard the moaning of the dismal toad :
'I was a princess on a golden chair,
Right joyously I breathed the upper air,
With glory crowned and gladness shod
The polished palace floors I trod ;
I smiled to hear my mother say,
"Such shows as these shall pass away."
Now as I sit where the well is deep,
I weep all day, all night I weep,
For the gladness has gone, and the glory flown,
And here I live in the mud alone.'

FROM BACON

WINGS for the feet, not shoulders, poets need,
To grace the motion of the flying deed,
Slowly prepared, accomplishèd with speed.

TO MAY

THROUGH the garden of my dreams
Scantly the sunlight gleams,
And the barren grass plot seems
Void of grace.

Yea, a wilderness indeed !
Every flower has run to seed,
Dying slowly ; every weed
Grows apace.

In the spring last year there grew
Violets white and violets blue,
But never a dream or a flower for you,
May, the Queen.

Though your small feet, as you walk,
Hardly bend the cowslip's stalk,
Or disturb the daisies' talk
On the green ;

And your white hands would not mar
The petals of one yellow star,
Where primroses in clusters are,
In the grass ;

Though I know you fear to break
The blue bell's stem, or even shake
Her fragile tower for music's sake,
As you pass,

Yet methinks 'tis passing strange
To hear the sudden catch and change
In the ringings airy range
Of delight.

Such a chilly sobbing breath
Through the sunshine shivereth ;
From the open gates of Death,
And of Night ;

Till the music's rapid whim
Groweth very slow and dim,
Dying in a mournful hymn
Solemnly,

And each heavy purple bell
Seems to ring a funeral knell
For the spirit of the dell
Doomed to die :

While without the garden rail
Bright anemones turn pale
As the lilies of the vale,
And the breeze,

Where the sleeping river lies
Underneath the tranced skies
In swift gusts of terror flies
Through the trees.

Seemeth it so small a thing
Clouds and darkness thus to fling
In the sunny face of Spring,
Striking down

All the thrills and flights of thirds
Of the music of the birds,
With a weight of weary words
And a frown !

Till the lark in his ascent
Seemeth but to make lament,
That all flowers have lost their scent
On the earth ;

And the tulips talk in Dutch,
Of the little human touch
That makes sadness overmuch
For their mirth.

Whilst the wild wood Columbine,
Cannot for her life divine
Why the sun has ceased to shine,
As of old.

Where across the lawn you glide,
Buttercups on every side
Deep among the mosses hide,
All their gold.

At the rustle of your gown
The very sunshine seems to frown,
And the daisies shudder down
In the grass.

Shall I thank you much for this
That you spare my clematis,
For you blight it with a kiss,
As you pass.

Ah ! the cowslips once were sweet,
Spreading out their golden sheet
In a carpet for your feet,
Soft and bright.

Yet they faded one by one,
Lying withered in the sun
Till the very thrushes shun
Such a sight.

Two tall tulips by the gate
Spent the sunny hours of late
In a stately tête-à-tête,
 Growing bold.

Nodding each emphatic head,
Found their petticoats too red,
Wished that they were white instead,
 Trimmed with gold.

Now their petals flutter down,
And the scarlet fades to brown,
As a smile turns to a frown
 In your eyes.

Oh the dead dreams everywhere ;
Wingèd hopes that once were fair,
Flitting through the tremulous air,
 Butterflies !

Broken winged and dead they lie,
Where beneath the faded sky
Every flower seems to die,
 In the land.

Blossoms wither where you go,
The very brambles will not grow ;
The grass looked yellow as from snow
 Where you stand,

Leaning lightly, lest you fall,
 Like a lily white and tall,
 With the carven sun-dial
 For a crutch.

Thrilling through his overgrown
 And moss-hidden heart of stone,
 With the melody unknown
 Of your touch.

You, before whose blighting breath
 Every flower withereth,
 Have cast your shadow as of Death
 On the green.

In the spring this year there grew
 Nothing but rosemary and rue,
 And one white lily flower for you,
 May, the Queen.

A WELCOME

FRIEND, you enter to your heritage at length,
You may pluck your laurels from the ruins of our
strength ;

Desecrate our churches, liberate our slaves,
Gather roses even from the gardens of our graves.
But this thing I charge you, nay, beseech you,
gracious lord,

Though you ravage all the city now with fire and
the sword,

Though our lives go down in darkness and our
children's blood is spilt,

Yet respect the gold we toiled for, and the treasury
we built ;

You, who know not any worship for things mortal
or divine,

Bow your head and enter humbly, this is Mammon's
inmost shrine.

A LOST MEMORY

IVORY-GATED, velvet-lined
Is the cupboard in my mind,
Where I put the things I find
 On the shelves.
There behind the great white door
Lies my precious, piled-up store—
All the things I knew before
 I saw the elves.

Misery, ah ! misery,
They have made a fool of me,
Stealing thus my golden key
 In the night.
When I tried to break the lock,
The house trembled with the shock,
But the door stood like a rock,
 Firm and white.

For the elves, they understood,
I might curse them if I would,
It was not the slightest good—

Waste of breath.

When I meet them on the stairs
They laugh at all my fruitless prayers,
For they say my key is theirs
Until Death.

Oh, lock up your dusty shelves !
Lest the little reckless elves,
Seeking what they want themselves,
Should invade
The dark cupboards of your mind,
Hide your keys, or you may find
That they leave no hope behind
On their raid.

SPRING IN MANCHESTER

THE ghost of Twilight seems to dog
The feet of golden morning hours,
The sun gleams silver through the fog,
And silver frost lies on the flowers.

Poor battered crocus, feebly fair,
Smutty and stained and crouching down,
Half stifled by the smoky air
And murky coldness of the town.

And snowdrops, dreaming such a dream
Of magic sounds too sweet for sight,
And sunlit fields, and streams that seem
The very smile of Spring's delight.

When, long e'er primroses unfold
Their leaves, or birds care much to sing,
Bright crocus flowers with cloth of gold
Weave fairy carpets for the spring,

Where all the earth is fresh and clean,
In deep still woods the snowdrops grow,
And spread above the struggling green
Their whiteness like a fall of snow.

First flowers of the Spring to be
You chosen children of the light ;
Was it but inborn purity
That made you so divinely white ?

Nay, rather powers of sun and breeze,
And fresh sweet air, and scent, and sound,
The sunshine gleaming through the trees,
The gentle forces of the ground.

Else had you not grown lovelier
Than these grey ghosts who mourn their loss,
The great beech boughs that shake and stir
Above green bowers of rain-washed moss.

You flowers who shiver through the gloom,
Round whom the blighting east wind sighs,
Was it your fault, or Nature's doom,
That shut you out from Paradise ?

Remorselessly she passed you by,
Poor broken-petalled silver ghosts,
Phantoms of flowers, left to die
So far from all her sunny hosts.

Her gay-clad hosts, whose light and mirth
Brings sunshine to the eyes of Truth,
And crowns the ancient brows of earth
With garlands of eternal youth,

'Twas strange she left you lying there,
With weeds and bits of broken glass,
You that might once have been so fair—
Dead flowers on the blackened grass.

And yet not strange, for all her ways
Are hard and oftentimes unjust,
Yet gently, after many days,
She mingles always dust with dust.

Dust of bright blossoms, manifold
Dust of stained petals, glad to fall,
Mixed with the same devouring mould
The same stars shine above them all.

Forgotten, yet not all unblest,
Redeemed from strife, and hope, and fear,
Wrapped in that silent dream of rest,
Whence springs the life of every year.

Dead flowers ! To the world is lost
So much of beauty, joy, and light,
Killed by an accidental frost
Embittering a winter's night.

AFTER THE STORM

How the battle raged last night
Through my garden of delight,
And the east wind carried death
In the terror of its breath.
Broken is each lily's cup
The very moss is withered up,
Where life and light were once outpoured,
One sunbeam, like a dead man's sword,
Lies split and shattered on the grass,
 Alas ! alas !

DEFEATED

ONE more defeat ! and so we've failed again ;
We can but yield, heart stricken and forlorn ;
Our swords are broken and our heroes slain,
The very flag of freedom stained and torn.

There's none to stand, and not one left to strike,
And evening veils the flight we call retreat ;
The sun goes down on friend and foe alike,
Their glorious victory and our defeat.

' It is too dark to fight,' a traitor's cry :
The sky's yet red, the sun's not quite gone down.
Cowards ! ye still see well enough to fly ;
Strike now, if any yet would save the town !

One more defeat, you think it's time to yield ;
Nay, we're not conquered, only driven back,
For in the language of the battle-field
One more defeat means but one more attack.

DEFEATED

III

A desperate hope, by desperation led,
Shall triumph in the strong name of despair;
For the great cause, in honour of the dead,
Charge once again, now follow ye who dare!

Oh! comrades, heroes, can you still hang back?
'Tis madness! Nay, can courage not enlarge
The bounds of reason? Is it that you lack
Courage? No! then sound the trumpet.—Charge!

FROM THE FRENCH (of VICTOR HUGO).

WHEN the fog hangs heavy and chill as death,
When the moonlight floats where the sunshine
stood,
And the evening fills with its shivering breath
The pallid darkness of field and wood—
We will walk through the green land weeping
again,
We will lean and rest in the dying light,
Our mortal souls opened out by pain,
On the flowers that are open at night.
Calm night has made such a sombre prayer
From the rumours of earth and the stars above,
Whilst we, of the darkness of life and despair
Have made but love.

THE PHILOSOPHER

(BACON)

You think it strange that I resort
To seek Diogenes at Court?
Nay, for he knows he needs material things,
To give them is the privilege of kings :
Whilst the poor king, indeed,
Knows not his own sore need,
Else he would put his empty glory by
And kneel to court divine philosophy.

TO CERTAIN REFORMERS

As long as idols stand
In the holy place, as of old,
And, instead of light through the land,
Shines the tawdry glitter of gold,
So long as the senses reign,
And the spirit is trodden down,
Your desire ye shall not gain,
Ye shall not win your crown ;
For the flesh is very strong,
And the spirit is weak in the strife,
And the weak must suffer wrong,
These are the ways of life :
Yet, take your swords in hand,
And fight for the light to be,
And the spirit's promised land
Of Truth and Liberty.
White-souled women of the past,
Heard ye not the trumpet blast ?
Were your spirits less pure then,
Feebler than the souls of men ?
Men who told you, you are good,
Holy, be it understood,
And yet neither strong nor wise—
May the spirit purge their eyes

And teach the foolish world at length
That purity is always strength.
Right divine to rule ye feel,
Strong in you the stronger born,—
Then your right divine reveal,
Lest your claims be met with scorn ;
For whilst the sky shines clear and blue
Above us, these two things are sure,
Who would be wise must first be true,
Who would be strong must first be pure.
Ye who have not learnt your power,
Whose chained spirits shrink and cower
Slavery stunted, idly tame,
Lift your hearts whilst every nerve
Quickens, in the spirit's name
Boldly claim the right to serve !
Band together, fighters you,
Strength and wisdom shall endure,
Who would be wise must first be true,
Who would be strong must first be pure
 Then put your trust
 In the spirit's strife ;
 The body is dust,
 And the spirit life,
And take your swords in hand
To fight for the Light to be,
Ye shall reach your promised land,
And the Truth shall make you free.

FALLEN NATURE

WHAT though thick clouds have quenched the
 moon,
 And all the stars must follow soon,
 For blind winds groping in the dark
 Swiftly blow out each flaring spark,
 Whilst the night grows wild and strange
 With the voice of change,
 What though the room is warm and bright,
 And the fire burns gold on a chilly night—
 Let us rise up, my soul, and go,
 For outside in the wind and the snow
 I see a shadowy form,
 I hear a voice in the storm—
 Oh, Lucifer ! through closed doors
 My heart goes out to yours.
 Soul of the Universe,
 My soul immerse,
 In the deep waters of the rolling years,
 And all the rainbow light of falling tears.

Son of the morning, art thou fallen indeed

As the good seed,

The life of spring that's lying now

Cold in the furrows of the plough,

In the first glory of the deep

Unconsciousness of blessed sleep,

The wingèd seed that shall arise

To flaunt against the summer skies—

Till God from His mercy seat

Sees the banner of the wheat,

Her brazen yellow flag unfurled,

Waving out across the world.

Thus, Lucifer, from Earth's cold clay

Be thy Resurrection Day,

Fallen Nature reascend,

With the higher forces blend

This hidden human life of thine,

Thy sacrament of bread and wine.

Yet, soul of sin and life and pain

When thou dost enter heaven again,

Remember that the earth was sweet

To thy naked human feet,

Remember that the sea shone bright,

Spread out before the gates of light ;

When thou dost wave thy spirit's wing,

Think of the earth's good spirit spring,

And how her meadows were more fair

Than any wind-sown field of air ;

Remember how her daffodils
Waved vagrant over all the hills—
Nay, long before thy second birth,
Most humble angel of the earth ;
Remember, though thou wert not then
Regenerate or fit for men,
Earth spirit, essence of the sod,
Thou wert yet very near to God !

VISIONS OF SOLITUDE

To CON

I

Who shall venture to intrude
In the dim secluded wood,
Where the birds have hushed their song,
Fearing to do silence wrong,
And the wind's breath scarcely stirs
In the midst of shadowy firs ;
Whilst the sunshine, pale and thin,
Hardly dares to enter in,
Such a sombre gloom profound
Hallows the enchanted ground ?
Here old Time might end his life,
Rest from all his toil and strife,
Lay his sickle in the grass,
Smile to watch the hours pass,
And the low winds wander by,
Rustling through eternity.
Hush ! the silence grows immense
Soon a shape shall issue thence ;

Some fair Goddess white and tall,
Shadowy-limbed, majestic ;
Leaning on her bow and spear,
Cynthia's self might venture here ;
Satyrs through the bracken glide,
Or the lonely wood nymph hide,
'Twas in such a place that Pan
Last was seen of mortal man.
Have the gods then in derision
Swept away our powers of vision,
Dreams and poems manifold,
Souls of stories never told,
And those sacred fancies, known
Once to Mother Earth alone ?
Have they robbed her thus and fled,
Gone to dwell amongst the Dead ?
Bringing these good gifts of hers
To their ancient worshippers.
Shadowy Phantoms, wild and gray,
Sweep along the great white way,
Shattering stars and scattering light
In the tumult of their flight,
Seeking high above the sky
In the Halls of Harmony
Light and peace, where lonely fate
Their desire can satiate ;
Where no human voices rude
On their silence can intrude,

But the Rainbow's column spread
Joins the living and the dead,
There they dwell alone, afar,
On some vast mysterious star ;
Or could time perchance deface
Even Aphrodite's grace,
Cynthia, growing old and wan,
Cease to charm Endymion ?
Or the light grow dim that lies
In Athenè's cold gray eyes ?
The twilight of the gods began
First when Psyche flouted Pan,
Leaving him alone to dream
By the bulrush-bordered stream,
Forsaking the strange brotherhood
And secrets of the magic wood,
Foregoing all its ecstasies
And half-discovered mysteries
Of shady light and living shade ;
The all inconstant careless maid
From her faithful Lover fled,
' Following the Gleam,' she said.
So it is no vision stays
In these dim degenerate days,
To dazzle unaccustomed eyes
With its old world ecstasies.
Who shall wake the music mute
Of Apollo's broken lute ?

What strange priestess now can tell
The secrets of his oracle?
Nay, then in this dim and sweet
Shadow of a green retreat
Are the voices of the wood
Clearly known and understood,
Have the rash intruding hours,
Searching out all hidden powers,
Dragged its secrets forth to lie
Bare beneath the open sky?
And that song, to Life unknown,
Sung by Mother Earth alone,
Melody no spirit dare
Breathe upon the shrinking air
Sacred music unconfined,
Born of Silence and the wind,
Faintly heard amid the strife
Of Life that crieth out to Life,
Echoed back from sound to sleep,
Deep that answereth to Deep.
Dying with the mutterings
Of those hopeless drowning things,
That strive against the infinite
Dark waters of oblivion's night,
To wake the silence with a cry,
And probe the depths of mystery;
Making a transient flash and gleam
On the dark face of Lethe's stream,

A little shower of foam and light,
Flecking the surface of the night.
Heard by Eros, drowning there
The echoes of unanswered prayer,
Bending o'er the chasm's brink,
Watching life and gladness sink,
Through the skies reflected show,
Down to the dim depths below ;
Saved by Love when Hope was gone,
Rescued from oblivion,
Softly sung above the Dead
Sweet with joy remembered,
To Eros self grown doubly dear,
When chanted over Psyche's bier,
The North wind heard it passing by
And caught the ancient melody ;
Sang it loud along the black
Silence of his nightly track ;
Rang it clear across the sky
In great waves of harmony,
Beating up against the white
Glory of the growing light,
Thundering through Heaven above
Love's triumphant call to Love.
Dying when he fails for breath,
Death that answereth to Death !
Is that mighty music past,
Has the world grown old at last ?

Does the soul of man desire
Less Prometheus' stolen fire,
Can Tantalus his great thirst slake ?
Have weary hearts then ceased to ache ?
Do the Hours no longer throng
Round the chariot of song,
When the first swift quenched spark
Shudders out into the dark,
Waiting with awe-stricken eyes
For the golden shaft that flies
Suddenly and free and fair
Through great waves of throbbing air,
Down to where all swathed and hid
By oblivion's coverlid
Earth lies sleeping, in her dreams
The sudden flash of fire gleams,
New-born thoughts and feelings start
Into life in her chill heart,
Every Dream becomes a flower,
Deep rooted, waiting for its hour ;
In cold and darkness yet unborn,
Striving upwards to the morn.
How the struggling souls resent
The prisons of their punishment !
Beneath the silence and repose
That every peaceful valley knows,
And wintry calmness of the hills,
Deep buried Life and sorrow thrills,

And earth's great heart must throb and ache
For a smothered snowdrop's sake,
Till by the old accustomed pain
She knows herself alive again.

Are no midnight vespers chanted ?
No dark caverns vision haunted ?
Does no man worship now Divine
Poppy crownèd Proserpine ?
Has the laurel ceased to grow ?
Do the nymphs no longer know
How to make its foliage stir
Best to charm the wanderer,
That this forest glade can be
Untenanted of mystery ?
Hark, a rustle in the grass,
Heard ye not the wood nymph pass
Nay, she did not pass, but stayed,
Gazed around her unafraid,
Look upon her ye who dare,
Is she not, then, passing fair ?—
Mystery of mysteries !
By yonder tree the goddess lies,
And, although its branches spread
Leafy shelter round her head,
Still the sunbeams shiver through
On her coronet of dew,

And strange robes of radiant green,
Faery maiden, Forest Queen
Of the dim enchanted wood,
Phantom haunted Solitude !

II

Let us sail and sail away
Right across the sunny bay,
Leaving far behind the shore
Where the breakers evermore
Toss themselves and foam and fret,
Vainly striving to forget
What the inconstant sea gulls say,
Flashing on them through the spray,
Far beyond the sun's bright gates,
Where the quiet twilight waits,
And no ripples wave and sigh,
But the cold dead waters lie,
And the white sail flaps and falls
Like great flags at festivals.
Round us such a calm is spread
The sea's strange spirit might be dead,
Dead or drifting in a swoon
Through the silent afternoon,
Down to where the great waves are
Breaking on the sandy bar.
Surely we shall find the vision
Of that sunset land Elysian,

Where the clouds and mountains go
In the dreamy afterglow,—
Hush ! the silence grows immense,
Till a Presence issues thence ;
Folded are her rainbow wings,
Softly to herself she sings,
And her white feet may be seen
Dabbling in the waters green,
Whilst the winds on either hand
Seemed to wait her high command,
Chained and silent to fulfil
The mighty maiden's sovereign will.
High she sits, alone, serene,
Holy Universal Queen,
Snowy limbed and white and nude
Ocean Maiden Solitude !

FINIS

THE dogwood's dead, and a mantle red
Over the corpse is flung,
Bow down, oh willow, your silver head,
Summer's silver and winter's red
Glory and gray and green have fled,
All winds are silent, all sorrows said,
And all songs sung.

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